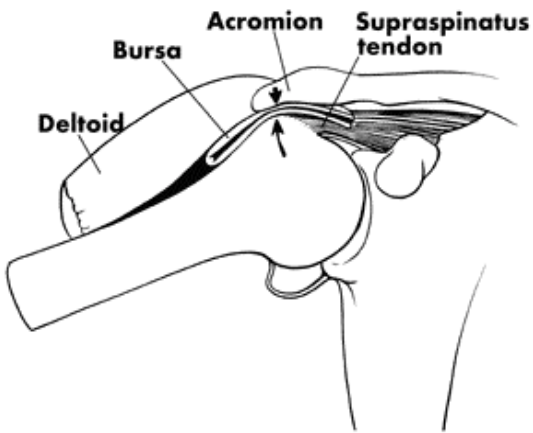




United States Military Academy
Sports Medicine-Physical Therapy Services
Keller Army Community Hospital and Arvin Gym, West Point, New York
"Academic, Research, and Clinical Excellence"

Shoulder Impingement Syndrome



Shoulder impingement is a very common cause of shoulder pain. Impingement occurs when the humerus (arm bone) pinches into the roof of the shoulder joint with overhead motion. Structures that may be pinched between the humerus and the roof of the joint include a muscular tendon (supraspinatus) and a fluid filled sack (subacromial bursa). If repeatedly pinched these structures become irritated and inflamed resulting in pain every time the arm is lifted overhead. There are many causes for this condition and it is important to follow your individual treatment plan as prescribed by your therapist.

Symptoms

The most common symptom is sharp pain with overhead activity. In advanced cases the pain may become continuous and occur at night. The shoulder is frequently tender to touch over the front part of the shoulder.

Causes

Shoulder impingement is usually an overuse injury resulting from all or some of the following:

1. Repetitive overhead activities, especially combined with poor technique (tennis, baseball, weightlifting).
2. Having a shoulder that is unstable or too tight.
3. Weakness of the rotator cuff or scapular stabilizing muscles.
4. Poor posture (forward head and rounded shoulders).
5. Degenerative changes within the joints of the shoulder or muscles.

Treatment

1. Relative rest: It is extremely important to avoid repetitive activity that causes pain in your shoulder. If painful activities are not avoided then this condition will progress and get worse with time.
2. Control inflammation:
 - a. Ice daily for 20 minutes.
 - b. Medication - non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed.
3. As the pain is relieved, a stretching, range of motion, and strengthening program will also be given to you to help prevent this condition from occurring again.

4. Surgery is very rarely required for this condition.
- **Based off of the findings of your exam your physical therapist will help you develop a well-balanced treatment plan that meets your specific needs.**